

REMARKS

Claims 12, 25 and 67 have been amended to obviate the rejection thereof under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph.

Claims 1-3, 5, 6, 9, 12, 15, 17, 18, 22-26, 28-31, 33, 35, 39, 51 and 59-68 of the application remain rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over the combination of the Siegmund, Allred and Kurtzer references. Dependent claims have been rejected in combination with these references along with the Woodard, Eastman, Strack, or Kishi references.

Applicants respectfully traverse the rejection of the claims and note the following for consideration. The invention relates to a small diameter endoscope for use in orthopedic imaging. The independent claims have been amended to recite a second removable component, the cannula, that is attached to the first removable component, the probe.

Thus, Applicants have invented a small diameter endoscope for diagnostic orthopedic imaging having a first disposable component, namely, the probe, and a second disposable component, the cannula. The cannula extends over the removable probe to provide for percutaneous entry that is required for orthopedic applications. The cannula can be attached to the removable (disposable) probe with a locking mechanism and can also include a fluid delivery

port. This provides an interconnected three component system that is not described or suggested in the cited references.

Applicants further respectfully traverse the rejected based on Siegmund, Allred and Kurtzer. In particular, it would not be obvious to reduce the size of Siegmund in view of the resulting loss in image size and resolution and thereby compromise the diagnostic value. There is also no teaching in the references using a cannula with a small diameter disposable device. Applicants submit that it would not be obvious to combine the recited features in a small diameter orthopedic imaging device. Reconsideration is respectfully requested.

The Examiner is encouraged to telephone the undersigned attorney to discuss any matter that would expedite allowance of the present application.

Respectfully submitted,

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